

Testimony in support of Bill 6390
March 15, 2011 4:00 P.M.

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To: Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee,

On Tuesday March 15, 2011 this committee convened in a public hearing to accept testimony regarding bill HB 6390, Granting Access to In-State Tuition. As identified above, I Deacon Ramon A. Rosado testified in favor of Bill HB 6390. This is my testimony.

Thank you Madam Chair;

Madam chair, distinguished senators and representatives; today you have heard several legal and religious testimonies. I sit here before you now to testify from a different point of view, that of a concerned citizen and above all that of a concerned parent. I was born in Puerto Rico; as such neither I nor my four children had to face the challenges that these young men and women have to face. Nonetheless there is a child of mine of whom I'd like to share with you, my youngest daughter, Melanie.

Melanie was a student at Bulkeley High School. She was an honor student, excelling academically. She was also a strong athlete who played softball, basketball and soccer and was captain of two teams. Melanie applied to several colleges in and out of state. She was rejected by some, accepted by many, including St Joseph College of Vermont from which she was offered a four year, \$18,000 per year grant to attend. In the end Melanie chose to attend the University of Connecticut. Her dream was to become a veterinarian and eventually open her own business, here in her home city and state, Hartford, CT.

Unfortunately just two months short of her high school graduation, in the early hours of April 15, 1999, as she slept peacefully surrounded in the love of her family, Melanie died; her dream and her promise died with her. The previous year, as a contestant in the Miss San Juan Pageant, Melanie was asked, "What message would you share with the youth in our community?"

She answered:

"Set goals for yourself; follow your dreams and don't let anyone get in your way. Become a positive role model for the children in our community."

Every time I look at these young men and women, I see my daughter. When I look in their eyes, I see her dreams; these are the positive role models of whom she spoke.

Madam chair, distinguished senator, representatives; divine intervention stopped my daughter's personal dreams, divine intervention stopped the contributions she dreamed of offering our state, our nation, she dreamed to offer humanity. As a man of faith I can accept that; I can live with that and do live with it for I know that she is now a citizen of a much greater Kingdom.

What I cannot accept, what we must not accept, is that the dreams of these beautiful young minds should be hindered, stopped, or destroyed by the simple stroke of a pen; especially when these can be nourished and encouraged by that same action.

Therefore, as a citizen, as a man of God, as a parent, I ask you to please support Bill HB 6390.

Respectfully submitted,
Deacon Ramón A. Rosado